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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a brief description of secondary education in Austria. The publication is part of a series that seeks to make the public aware of the education systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention and to outline the essential problems these systems presently are facing. This short booklet contains twelve sections. Part 1, "The Societal and Political Context," contains: (1) "What is Secondary Education?" (2) "Administrative Organisation'; (3) "Recent Developments"; and (4) "Diagram of the Educational System." Part 2, "The Process of Policy-making and Innovation," includes: (1) "Decision-makers"; and (2) "Support Services." Part 3, "Financing and Budgeting," focuses on: (1) "Funding Bodies"; (2) "Costs Incurred by Parents"; and (3) "Statistical Data." Part 4, "School and Society," examines: (1) "The World at Large"; and (2) "Parents." Part 5, "Administration and Organisation," contains: (1) "Streams and Options"; (2) "University Access"; (3) "Grade-to-Grade Promotion"; and (4) "Special Groups." Part 6, "The School as an Organisation and as a Community," examines: (1) "School Rules"; (2) "Deviant Behaviour, Absenteeism and Truancy; (3) "Extracurricular Activities, Social Relations"; and (4) Work by Pupils." Part 7, "The Curriculum," focuses on: (1) "Formal Parameters"; (2) "Sample Timetables"; (3) "Syllabuses"; (4) "Religion"; and (5) "Curricular Trends." Part 8, "Evaluation and Assessment," examines: (1) "Pupil Assessment"; (2) "System Evaluation and the Inspectorate"; and (3) "Assessment of Teachers." Part 9, "School Staff," includes: (1) "Senior Staff"; (2) "Teacher Training and Recruitment"; (3) "Stages in a Teacher's Career"; (4) "Teachers' Duties"; (5) "Teachers' Salaries"; and (6) "Other Staff." Part 10, "The European Dimension," includes: (1) "Curricular Provisions"; and (2) "Extracurricular Activities." Part 11, "Efficiency and Performance Statistics," contains: (1) "Enrollment"; (2) "Graduates with the Right to University Access"; (3) "Percentages of Repeaters/Drop-outs"; (4) "Admissions to Higher Education"; (5) "Proportion of 15-Year-Olds Neither in Full-Time Schools Nor in the Dual System"; and (6) "Unemployment Rates." Part 12 examines "Challenges, Problems, and Prospects." (EH)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Secondary education in Austria

by Helmut Aigner

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

Council of Europe Press, 1995

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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-four member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-three states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Moldova, Monaco, Russia and Ukraine.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural, democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

Available shortly in the same series

– *Secondary education in France*
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Contents

Page

I. The societal and political context 9

1. What is secondary education? 9
2. Administrative organisation 11
3. Recent developments 14
4. Diagram of the educational system 15

II. The process of policy-making and innovation 17

1. Decision-makers 17
2. Support services 19

III. Financing and budgeting 21

1. Funding bodies 21
2. Costs incurred by parents 22
3. Statistical data 22

IV. School and society 25

1. The world at large 25
2. Parents 25

V. Administration and organisation 27

1. Streams and options 27
2. University access 32
3. Grade-to-grade promotion 33
4. Special groups 33

VI. The school as an organisation and as a community 35

1. School rules 35
2. Deviant behaviour, absenteeism and truancy 35

3. Extracurricular activities, social relations 36
4. Work by pupils 36

VII. The curriculum 37

1. Formal parameters 37
2. Sample timetables 37
3. Syllabuses 42
4. Religion 43
5. Curricular trends 43

VIII. Evaluation and assessment 45

1. Pupil assessment 45
2. System evaluation and the inspectorate 47
3. Assessment of teachers 47

IX. School staff 49

1. Senior staff 49
2. Teacher training and recruitment 50
3. Stages in a teacher's career 51
4. Teachers' duties 52
5. Teachers' salaries 53
6. Other staff 53

X. The European dimension 55

1. Curricular provisions 55
2. Extracurricular activities 55

XI. Efficiency and performance statistics 57

1. Enrolment 57
2. Graduates with the right to university access 58
3. Percentages of repeaters/drop-outs 58
4. Admissions to higher education 58
5. Proportion of 15-year-olds neither in full-time schools nor in the dual system 59
6. Unemployment rates 59

XII. Challenges, problems and prospects 61

I. The societal and political context

1. What is secondary education?

Following the CDCC definition, secondary education in Austria comprises grades 5 to 13, as differentiation in programmes starts after the first four years of compulsory schooling. The legal basis of the school system (excluding universities as well as agricultural and paramedical education) is the School Organisation Act (SOA) of 1962, which was passed simultaneously with a number of other school laws as well as an amendment to the Constitution that makes any change in national school law subject to a requirement of a two-thirds majority in parliament. It might be expected that this rule could easily lead to petrifaction of the school system, but the required broad consensus on desirable changes is frequently possible, this means that the SOA has been amended on an average every two years. It is true, however, that evolution rather than revolution has been the rule – a tradition that goes back several centuries.

Compulsory schooling, which had previously covered the age group from 6 to 14 years, was extended to the age of 15 years in 1962.

The SOA does not use the term secondary education as such; rather, it defines a structure of two dimensions: the area of education (general, technical/vocational, teacher training) and its level (compulsory, intermediate, pre-university, non-university tertiary). The non-university tertiary level, which is currently represented only in the fields of teacher training and social work, is on the verge of being significantly expanded. It is, however, outside the scope of the present report. Levels as defined by the SOA do not necessarily correspond to age levels; indeed most schools beyond the compulsory level are open to adults of any age in the form of evening classes, etc.

General education comprises schools at the following levels:

- compulsory:
  - elementary school (*Volksschule*, also termed *Grundschule*, grades 1 to 4, exceptionally to 8, see Chapter 5);

- modern school (*Hauptschule*, grades 5 to 8);
- pre-vocational school (*Polytechnischer Lehrgang*, grade 9);
- special schools (*Sonderschulen*, for the severely handicapped, grades 1 to 8);

- pre-university:
  - grammar school (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* or *AHS*, grades 5 to 12);
  - upper-cycle grammar school (*Oberstufengymnasium* and *-real-gymnasium*, grades 9 to 12);
  - special grammar-school types (for those gifted in art, music, sports, etc., up to grade 13).

It will be seen that the special schools and a negligible number of elementary schools straddle the primary and secondary levels, while the grammar school straddles the compulsory and post-compulsory periods. The grammar school curriculum is conveniently divided into a lower cycle (grades 5 to 8) and an upper cycle (grades 9 to 12).

Technical/vocational education comprises schools at the following levels:

- compulsory:
  - part-time vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*, grades 10 to 11 or 12 or 13).

- intermediate:
  - full-time vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere Schulen*, grades 9, 9 to 10 or 11 or 12);

- pre-university:
  - technical schools (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen*, grades 9 to 13).

It will be seen that the first year of both full-time vocational and technical schools falls within the period of compulsory schooling.

Part-time vocational schools are listed at the compulsory level, since everybody, irrespective of age, who is under an apprenticeship contract, must attend such a school during 20% to 30% of the working week ("dual system" of vocational education). The enterprise-based part of training under the

dual system is not normally included when secondary education is referred to. However, it is subject to detailed legal regulation in the Vocational Training Act and subsidiary ordinances.

In the classification of technical/vocational schools a third dimension, namely of branches, is used, reflecting the structures of the world of work: industrial schools, crafts schools, commercial schools, hotel and catering schools, domestic-science schools, schools of social work, paramedical schools and schools of agriculture and forestry. Many of these branches have up to several dozen subdivisions.

Non-university teacher training comprises schools at the pre-university level only:

– normal schools (*Bildungsanstalten*, for nursery-school teachers and para-educational staff, grades 9 to 13).

Again the first year falls within the compulsory-schooling period.

2. Administrative organisation

The administrative organisation of the schools defined by the SOA is laid down in the Constitution as amended in 1962 and in the School Inspection Act of the same year. Whereas Austria's federal constitution provides for an even distribution of powers between federal authorities and the nine provinces, education is by and large a federal matter, with parliament making the laws and the Federal Ministry of Education and Arts administering them.

The following matters are, however, in the hands of the provinces:

– chartering and funding of compulsory-level schools. This may be delegated to municipalities, and all teachers' salaries in general schools and 50% of teachers' salaries in vocational schools at this level are refunded from federal coffers;

– preparation of syllabuses for compulsory-level schools on the basis of ministry guidelines;

– regulation of the school year and the school day within rather narrow limits set by the ministry;

– personnel matters including hiring of staff. For the non-compulsory-level schools, appointments are made by the Federal Minister (for pre-university school heads by the Head of State) from a shortlist prepared at the provincial level.

Each of the provinces (*Länder*) has its provincial school board, which is nominally a federal agency under the Federal Ministry of Education and Arts. The shortlists mentioned above as well as decrees on matters of detail are prepared by these politically appointed boards[1] (membership is in proportion to the respective strength of the political parties in the provincial diet) without federal influence, and they must also be heard on matters of proposed syllabuses, while in other matters tenured civil servants carry out instructions from the ministry as well as school inspection and first-instance handling of appeals in matters of non-promotion, final examination failure, etc. The boards have administrative staff consisting of both educational and legal experts as well as clerical staff. The majority of the educational experts are inspectors.

The provinces are subdivided into districts (minimum four, maximum twenty-five), each with its district school board. The latter's composition is analogous to that of the provincial school boards, and it fulfils some of the above-mentioned functions for the compulsory-level general schools.

The following special structures exist for some segments of the system:

– in Vienna and its twenty-three districts a single body is both provincial and district school board;

– for historical reasons a small number of pre-university schools (four industrial schools, the thirteen residential grammar schools and one normal school) come under the direct authority of the federal ministry without an intervening provincial school board;

– the administrative structure of pre-university schools of agriculture and forestry is similar, but responsibility is shared by the Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry (chartering, funding, personnel) and of Education and Arts (pedagogical matters). Intermediate-level schools of agriculture are controlled solely by the provincial diets and administrations (not the provincial school boards);

– the first year of paramedical curricula is considered a full-time vocational school, whereas the remainder is currently controlled directly by the Federal Ministry of Health, Environmental and Consumer Protection. Agreement has been reached in principle to bring these schools into the regular pattern;

– the Federal Ministry of Defence operates a logistics school.

Private schools may be established freely, and they are basically subject to inspection in matters relating to public safety only. However, as the general

1. Only the members of the boards proper are nominated by the political parties of the provinces concerned.

public sets great store by official certificates and diplomas, it is the aim of most private schools to obtain the right to issue such documents through accreditation by the federal ministry. Accreditation is only granted if the school complies with all laws and ordinances pertaining to public schools, including curricula and staff qualification rules. Accredited non-profit private schools are usually heavily subsidised, usually by making the teaching staff federally paid civil servants, thus ensuring affordable tuition fees.

A more modest aim of some private schools (often of "alternative" persuasion) is ministry recognition of their suitability for fulfilling pupils' compulsory-schooling obligation. Pupils of compulsory school age who attend such a school are not required to sit for publicly administered examinations at the end of each school year, as pupils attending non-recognised private schools as well as children receiving instruction at home would have to.

Most accredited private schools are operated by the Roman Catholic Church and other religious bodies, or by employers' and employees' organisations.

A pupil can fulfil his/her school obligation in a non-accredited private school "provided instruction is at least equivalent to that of a compulsory public school" (Compulsory Schooling Act) or indeed by private instruction at home. The pupil must, however, pass an annual test at a public school and forfeits the above right if he/she fails. The equivalence of instruction under the act at a given private school is decreed and published by the ministry.

The following table shows the latest available percentages of pupils in accredited private schools of the various types. Asterisks mark the types where private schools are mainly operated by the Catholic Church; the others are mainly operated by the provinces or by employers' and employees' organisations.

Elementary school	3,9% *
Modern school	4,1% *
Special school	2,7% *
Pre-vocational school	0,1% *
Grammar school	14,1% *
Part-time vocational school	0,6%
Full-time vocational schools:	
industry, crafts	38,3%
commerce	16,2%
domestic science	34,1% *
social work	76,5%
agriculture, forestry	2,2%

Technical schools	
industry, crafts	7,0%
commerce	12,8%
domestic science	14,0%
agriculture, forestry	1,5% *
Normal schools	41,9% *
Colleges:	
social work	65,5% *
general teacher training	37,7% *
vocational teacher training	0,0%

The total proportion of pupils in accredited private schools has dropped from 7,6% to 7,0% in the last twenty years, mainly because of applications for nationalisation by private school operators.

As accredited private schools have the same syllabuses and the same kind of staff as the general schools, reasons for attendance are mainly geographic (no public school of the desired type in the neighbourhood), religious or social (even a low tuition fee acts as a social threshold). A very few private schools avail themselves of the right to be non-co-educational.

The proportion of pupils of general schools in non-accredited public schools is estimated at 0,2%, to which can be added the 0,4% in the three international schools in Vienna. These percentages are fairly stable, and – with the exception of a defunct school run by a commune – no interest of sects, etc., has been observed. They attract parents who feel that the products of public and accredited schools tend to be too "well-adapted" – too "conditioned".

3. Recent developments

The system as a whole shows a high degree of centralisation, which is a boon to pupils transferring from one school to another of the same type. On the other hand, it shows many of the drawbacks of a centralised bureaucracy. That is why plans are under way to delegate more power to individual schools, for example:

– the power to make their own syllabus for a small percentage of the curriculum;

– the right to decide on the subjects requiring reduced class sizes and hence splitting of regular classes, subject to overall budget limitations;

– significant extension of the cost limit beyond which an investment needs to be authorised by the ministry.

The fourteenth amendment to the School Organisation Act, which provides for the first two items above, has been passed by parliament's educational committee. It is expected to be passed by the full house before summer. The third has already been implemented by ministerial decree.

The short-listing process as practised by the provincial school boards has come increasingly under fire in the last decade. While minimum requirements are laid down by law, it has been claimed that the decision among candidates for a headship or inspectorship, and indeed sometimes for a teaching post, was often based more on party affiliation than on pedagogical and administrative aptitude. In response to these charges, various systems of objective assessment of suitability have been explored, and it is intended to permit representatives of teachers, pupils and parents at the school in question to make an initial proposal, which the provincial school board would be allowed to alter only after showing cause.

Pupils dropping out of a pre-university-level school after failing to be promoted to the next grade frequently opt for training at a non-recognised private school, followed by a publicly administered extramural final examination for university access. Until recently, this examination could not be taken before the date when the pupil would have been ready for it if he had stayed in school and repeated the failed grade. This limitation, which had been criticised as preventing the private schools from proving that they could do better than the public sector, has now been dropped, so that lost time can now be made up for.

Pupils who leave the upper cycle of the grammar school hardly ever enter non-accredited schools. What they frequently do is enrol in private preparatory courses for an extramural final examination. These are not legally schools at all, as their aim does not include moral education. The only statistics available are those of extramural examinations at the grammar schools in Vienna, which show one such examination for every sixteen regular ones, but with a much lower rate of success at the candidates' first attempt, namely, 51,0%, compared with 88,2% for the regular examinations. No significant change in these figures has been observed.

4. Diagram of the educational system

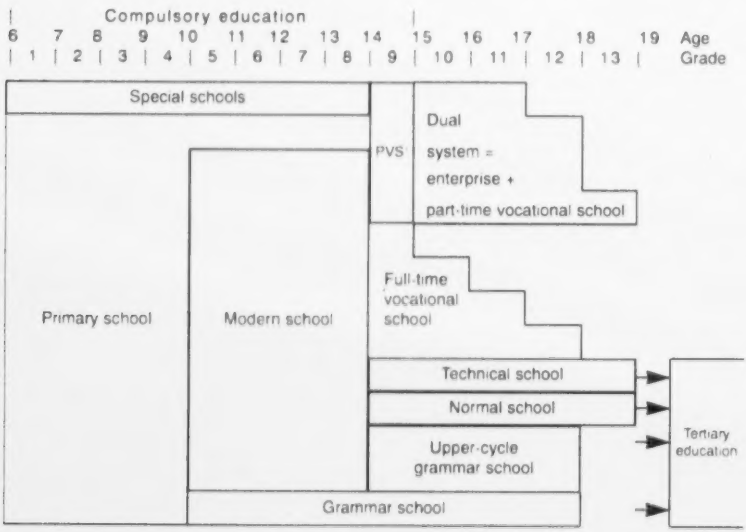
Because of its age-based structure this diagram cannot show some types of schools that are considered secondary:

- schools (evening classes) for adults;

- upgrading courses from one technical/vocational level to the next higher level;

– technical/vocational updating courses;

– two-year (exceptionally three-year) colleges for grammar-school leavers desiring the supplementary qualification of technical-school leavers.


Compulsory education
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Age
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Grade
Special schools
Dual system = enterprise + part-time vocational school
PVS
Primary school
Modern school
Full-time vocational school
Technical school
Normal school
Upper-cycle grammar school
Grammar school
Tertiary education

1 PVS = pre-vocational school

II. The process of policy-making and innovation

1. Decision-makers

The role of parliament and of federal and provincial administrative bodies in education has been outlined in Chapter I. In order to achieve a broad national consensus in matters of education, every potentially interested organisation is formally heard before a bill is submitted to parliament or before a syllabus or other ordinance is signed by the federal minister. The list of bodies to be heard includes the provincial school boards (by law), the provinces, all other ministries, all recognised religious bodies, autonomous public bodies (from the chambers of labour and commerce to the Association of Patent Attorneys), federations (and sometimes individual member bodies thereof) of parents', teachers' and youth organisations, and indeed every organisation that has both a sizable membership and an interest, however marginal, in education. Some of the bodies in question have formal or informal internal mechanisms for collecting the opinions of their sub-bodies. These organisations, many of which have a federal structure reflecting the structure of public administration, include teachers', parents', pupils', employers' and employees' organisations, minority councils and special interest groups, as well as other ministries, provincial governments and provincial school boards.

In addition, a permanent School Reform Commission uniting representatives of these groups acts in an advisory capacity to the federal minister. There are sub-committees of this commission as well as special advisory boards dealing with specific questions.

The School Reform Commission has been conceived as an advisory organ, originally with the accent on reform of the upper cycle of the grammar school. It meets on average twice a year; its five sub-committees twice as often. Its role is advisory only, and its main usefulness is in permitting more extended and more informal debates of educational issues than are possible in legislative bodies. It also offers leading university professors of education their main opportunity to confer with other interested parties. As the issues raised and the opinions stated within the commission are usually mirrored in other bodies, it is difficult to assess the commission's ultimate efficiency.

Of the three ways of introducing a bill into parliament, namely, cabinet proposal, motion from the floor and plebiscite, the first is by far the most common. Such initiatives are most frequently conceived within the ministry, but proposals from outside (for example, by teachers, parents, employers' and employees' organisations, and the media) may supply the initial impetus.

A plebiscite must be organised by federal authorities if either 10 000 voters or eight members of parliament or four members from each of three provincial diets sign a petition calling for it. Voters can either register in favour of the text (no secret ballot) or abstain, and parliament must treat the text as a regular bill if at least 100 000 voters or one-sixth of the voters in three provinces have registered. The current average of plebiscites is about one per year. There has only been one on educational matters: in the 1960s the extension of the grammar school to nine years as enacted by parliament was challenged in a plebiscite and rescinded before coming into effect (the Minister of Education who had championed it resigned).

The minister is responsible to parliament. In addition, a constitutional court ensures that acts of parliament do not violate the Constitution and that ordinances do not exceed the mandate given in the act on which they are based. Redress against wrongful administrative measures is available through an administrative court.

The structures described in this section have mostly remained static over the last few decades; only the involvement of pupils' organisations dates from the 1970s and is still growing.

The system has, by and large, worked to general satisfaction. The two-thirds majority required for a change in school law might seem to incur the risk of petrifaction, but in effect twenty-one years after the original act, its fourteenth amendment is about to be passed and the fifteenth is in the draft stage. The tradition of finding consensus desirable and of a system that facilitates reaching it was first developed under the four-power occupation of 1945-55, so that a united front could be presented to the Allied powers. It has since been found so useful that, aside from well-reasoned theoretical contributions aired by scholars and journalists, no major changes have been proposed.

2. Support services

Data collection and documentation

This is available on request from the federal ministry, which has statistics and documentation departments. The support of the Central Statistical Office can also be solicited. The demand for these services from schools is low.

Educational research

Educational research is carried out in both free and commissioned form. Major carriers include universities, institutes of further teacher training and research institutes of employers' and employees' organisations.

A Centre for Pilot Projects and School Development attached to the federal ministry unites researchers and administrators and acts as an interface between research and innovation.

Among areas of research of current interest are the transitions from school to work and to university as well as multicultural education.

Curriculum development

The elaboration of first drafts of curricula is entrusted to project groups composed exclusively, or mainly, of teachers. The opinion of interest groups is heard before a final version is prepared by federal ministry officials and submitted for the federal minister's signature.

Guidance and counselling

Educational counselling is undertaken by a specially trained and regularly re-trained teacher at each school. Outside help is available from departments of the provincial school board and the federal ministry. Vocational counselling, on the other hand, is organised by the Federal Ministry of Labour, whose counsellors visit classes, particularly terminal ones, and are also available in their offices.

Educational tests and examinations

Most tests, including final examinations, are set by individual teachers. Quality assurance in this field is the business of heads of schools and inspectors. Standardised tests exist only as an aid for primary-school teachers in deciding aptitude for the grammar school and for the entrance examination of full-time vocational and technical schools. Elaboration of these tests is commissioned by the federal ministry's psychology department.

Psychological and medical assistance; social work

Psychological assistance to pupils and teachers is afforded by officers in special departments within the provincial school boards and the ministry. They do not become active on their own but honour requests for help.

Depending on their size, schools have full-time or part-time resident physicians. There are also medical departments within the provincial school boards and the ministry.

The welfare authorities may become active in social work in the schools if their help is requested, although this is rare.

Nearly all support services have come under criticism for being too slight in scope. In particular full-time school-based staff for them are not infrequently requested. Although lack of funds has so far been generally accepted as an obstacle, particularly in view of the "half-day" nature of much of Austrian school education. One major criticism is directed at the standardised tests for being updated too infrequently (again for financial reasons), so that pirated copies can be used for illegal cramming courses. Elaboration of the tests is commissioned by the ministry, which also distributes them. It is up to primary-school teachers whether tests are taken by all pupils or only by candidates for the grammar school.

Free (as opposed to commissioned) educational research suffers from the same problems of relevance as in most countries. Otherwise, there is little criticism of the quality as opposed to the quantity of the various support services.

Staff numbers are as follows:

- Ministry of Education (statistics): 9;
- Ministry of Education (library and documentation): 10;
- Ministry of Education (curriculum development): 57 (but these also have other responsibilities);
- Ministry of Education (Centre for Pilot Projects and School Development): 14;
- Ministry of Education (school guidance and counselling, educational tests, psychological assistance): 6;
- provincial school boards, school guidance and counselling, etc.: 134;
- Ministry of Education (medical): 2;
- provincial school boards (medical): 9.

III. Financing and budgeting

1. Funding bodies

The responsibility for financing the public schools lies with public (federal, provincial, municipal) authorities as described in Chapter I. Criteria for financing include the type of school concerned, numbers of pupils and of teachers, volume of space to be heated, etc., while pedagogical evaluation plays no role in funding. Raw values thus arrived at are subject to correction for inflation, permanent special needs (for example, extra heating cost for exposed locations or poorly insulated premises) and necessary reinvestment.

The respective share of federal and provincial funding of schools cannot be accurately determined, since every few years federal and provincial authorities enter into a budgetary compact covering all areas of government, under which a proportion of federal revenue is passed to the provinces and vice versa. While the various obligations of funding authorities are taken into consideration in arriving at this compact, no monies are affected for any specific purpose. The division of funding responsibility described in Chapter I on administrative organisation must be seen in this light.

As explained in Chapter I, accredited private schools have the salaries of their teaching staff paid by federal authorities. All other costs must be met by tuition fees and voluntary contributions.

Day schools are the rule, and in most general schools this means half-day instruction (either Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday mornings, with only occasional afternoon lessons mainly for sports and optional subjects). There is considerable demand on the part of working couples and single parents for full-day supervision at school, but at present this is only available in a few schools as a pilot project. General provision for this service was to have been part of the fourteenth amendment of the SOA[1] but has come up against funding difficulties.

1. SOA = School Organisation Act

2. Costs incurred by parents

Publicly financed schools may charge pupils for meals, lodging and supervision during free afternoons. These services are provided by comparatively few schools, as boarding schools are rare and the school day ends early enough for many pupils to return home for lunch.

Textbooks are free to pupils and non-returnable. Only literary texts, which exist in cheap editions, as well as auxiliary material such as exercise books and compasses must be paid for by parents. Transport between the home and the school is also free, passes for public transport being underwritten by public authorities; parents only incur transport costs and incidental expenses for school outings, etc. All benefits also apply to pupils in private schools. With the exception of a few private schools, school uniforms do not exist.

Pupils beyond compulsory school age, as well as all pupils in boarding schools, are entitled to non-repayable federal grants if their average marks are better than 2,8 (corresponding to C+, see Chapter VIII) and parental income is below a prescribed limit.

In 1992/93, 29 627 pupils received a basic grant and 17 581 pupils a living-away-from-home grant, with an overlap of 10 523 pupils who receive both grants. Total expenditure for these grants in the previous year was 533 million Austrian schillings.

3. Statistical data

The following tabulation lists federal budgetary provisions for education (excluding universities) in absolute figures (in millions of schillings) and as a percentage of the federal budget. Because of the large proportion of expenditures effective in the whole education sector, it is not possible to quote figures relating to the secondary sector only. The higher percentages in the period 1970 to 1985 are explained by a major expansion programme, particularly in technical/vocational education, which has since stabilised.

1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993
8 736	16 795	26 966	37 982	46 139	50 470	52 035	57 656
8,60%	8,54%	8,80%	8,17%	7,08%	7,45%	7,02%	7,30%

Costs per pupil incurred by federal authorities have developed as follows (figures are schillings per pupil per year, adjusted for inflation). Note that the figures include only teachers' salaries for the compulsory general schools, and

only 50% of these salaries for the part-time vocational schools, where each pupil spends only 20% to 30% of the working week (see Chapter I).

	1976	1981	1986	1991
Grammar schools	18 654	20 332	24 603	27 774
Compulsory general schools (both primary and secondary)	9 703	12 618	15 408	16 925
Full-time technical/vocational schools (industrial)	35 577	33 713	33 229	34 302
Full-time technical/vocational schools (domestic science)	21 494	23 850	27 942	33 978
Full-time technical/vocational schools (commercial)	14 358	17 820	20 772	25 284
Part-time vocational schools	2 085	2 183	2 464	3 117

The lion's share of the increase is due to an improved teacher-pupil ratio – the number of teachers in federal employment rose by 39% from 1982 to 1991, whereas the number of pupils taught by them only increased by 14%.

IV. School and society

1. The world at large

Much of the interplay between the school system and the social environment has been dealt with in Chapter I. Relations between individual schools and the outside world are less developed because of the concentration of decision-making powers in the hands of central authorities. It is hoped that the coming trend of increased school autonomy will make for enhanced external relations. This does not, however, mean opening the schools to those who would see them as a market, since the law forbids advertising in schools for any purpose not germane to education.

Individual schools do build up outside contacts through theme projects and outings, though the impact of these contacts is difficult to gauge. It is probably greatest in the pre-vocational schools, where such activities, particularly visits to business and industrial enterprises, form a major part of the curriculum.

One area where relations are intensive and institutionalised is the interface between technical/vocational schools and enterprises. The staff of part-time vocational schools and pupils' trainers in enterprises co-ordinate their efforts under the dual system, and full-time industrial schools have advisory boards where, besides pupils, parents and teachers, employers and employees as well as other interested parties are represented. For teachers with a foot in both worlds see Chapter IX.

2. Parents

Parents were first formally integrated into school life by the School Instruction Act of 1974, though parents' associations at the school, provincial and national levels existed well before that date. Every school has an elected school council with equal representation of pupils, parents and teachers, which acts in an advisory capacity to the head. Its decision-making powers include passing of school rules but otherwise cover mostly marginal matters at present. Extensions are, however, likely in the current drive towards increased school autonomy.

After the teachers of a school have made their selections among the government-approved textbooks, parents must also be heard before the selection is validated by the provincial school board. Parents can also decide the type of afternoon supervision offered by a school. For their role in deciding the length of the school week, see Chapter V.

At the regional level, while some members of both the provincial and district school boards must be teachers, there must also be at least the same number of parents of schoolchildren.

26

V. Administration and organisation

1. Streams and options

Grades 5 to 8

A comparison of percentages of pupils attending the different types of school in this range is given below for the years 1982 and 1992.

	1982	1992
Upper primary school	0,16%	0,04%
Special school	3,27%	2,67%
Modern school	67,11%	68,29%
Comprehensive school	7,97%	nil
Grammar school	21,47%	29,00%

Upper-primary schools are attended by pupils in extremely sparsely populated areas. Rather than the subject teachers typical of all other secondary schools, they have class teachers, and classes may be composed of pupils in different grades. Only 167 pupils are affected, and if the current trend continues, these schools are likely to disappear in the very near future.

Special schools are reserved for the physically and mentally handicapped. The current trend of integrating such children into regular classes is expected to accelerate in the next few years.

Pupils are admitted into the modern school on successful completion of grade 4. To be admitted into a grammar school, marks in German, reading and mathematics must be "1" (A) or "2" (B); in case of a "3" (C) the pupil needs a recommendation by his or her primary-school teachers. If admission to grammar school is denied, parents may appeal and an entrance examination may be held.

The pilot projects for comprehensive schools, tabulated in 1982, were subsequently terminated when the required two-thirds parliamentary majority for their permanent establishment could not be attained. The early selection

inherent in the current system is mitigated by almost identical curricula of the modern school and the grammar school in grades 5 to 8, by transfer options at the end of each grade for pupils with above-average achievement, and by the transfer options open to all pupils after grade 8 (see section 2 of this chapter). As the admission requirement for the grammar school is not very selective, up to 70% of the age cohort attend grammar school in some districts of large cities, whereas in the country the modern school is much more popular, since the nearest grammar school frequently requires commuting to the district town.

Majority attendance of grammar schools is considered undesirable by many, particularly since the modern school offers differentiation by achievement groups ("setting") in German, the modern languages and mathematics, with frequent opportunities for reassignment. Of the several proposals for reform, none has yet emerged as a clear pattern for the future.

The only differentiation within the grammar school comes in grade 7, where one stream starts Latin, while another features extra mathematics and handicraft, and a third has extra chemistry, music and handicraft, but both of these may still start Latin in grade 9. Latin is a requirement for many university studies including law and medicine.

Grade 9

A comparison of percentages of pupils attending the different types of school in this grade is given below for the years 1982 and 1992.

	1982	1992
Pre-vocational school	29.75%	22.24%
Full-time vocational school	29.64%	25.80%
Technical school	20.01%	28.98%
Normal school	1.22%	1.73%
Grammar school (short)	14.36%	15.41%
Grammar school (long)	5.02%	5.84%

When the end of compulsory schooling was increased from grade 8 to grade 9 in 1962, the pre-vocational school was created to bridge the gap between the modern school and the dual system, with the expectation that most modern-school leavers would take this path. Both the pre-vocational school and the dual system are open to all young people of the defined minimum age, whether or not they have successfully completed the previous grade.

The "stigma" of being the only option for unsuccessful pupils has led many parents of children who did successfully complete grade 8 to look for alternatives – frequently a full-time vocational or technical school, with no intention to stay there beyond the first year and more often than not failing that year. These pupils tie down resources (more expensive teachers, workshop equipment, etc.) that could be better employed elsewhere. However, in spite of several curricular reforms of the pre-vocational school, parental reaction has stayed much the same.

Full-time vocational schools offer both short (one to two years) and long (three to four years) curricula. While the former afford semi-skilled training, the latter provide training at the skilled-worker level. Technical schools (frequently under a single roof and sharing the same head with full-time vocational schools in the same field) provide five-year curricula leading to both university access and qualification at technician level. Normal schools offer curricula leading to certification for nursery-school teachers and para-educational staff (see Chapter IX) as well as full university access. The entrance examination into all these schools is not very selective: the proportion of successful candidates is over 80% in the fields of hotel and catering occupations, agriculture and forestry, and between 92% and 98% in all other fields. Given the limited reliability of medium-term labour-market forecasts, no attempt – other than persuasion by counselling officers – is made to limit the number of pupils in fields with poor job prospects.

In the early 1970s the government started a programme to build more technical (and full-time vocational) schools, so that no able applicants would have to be turned away. This programme as well as the financial support for those in full-time schools and good job prospects contributed to a development of enrolment well above the demographic changes in age cohorts.

Pupils of grammar schools who do not wish to transfer to one of the above-mentioned types pass into the upper cycle by regular promotion from grade 8 to grade 9. Pupils who wish to transfer into grammar school after modern school either need above-average marks or an entrance examination. Because of the considerable number of such pupils the system provides grammar schools consisting of an upper cycle only. Both types of grammar school afford university access.

The chief reasons for transfer from grammar schools to other schools (mainly technical schools but also other full-time schools and indeed also the dual system) lies in job prospects, which are rather dim for grammar-school leavers without a university degree, and a realisation of low compatibility between a pupil's talents and the "academic" nature of grammar-school teaching.

The level of the syllabus and of the final examination is the same in eight-year and four-year grammar schools.

Attempts to collect statistics about transfers had to be given up in the 1970s for reasons of cost – only estimates are available. While transfer from the modern to the grammar school after grades 5, 6 and 7 is extremely rare, it can be said that practically all first-year pupils in the upper-cycle type of grammar school come from a modern school. On this basis a national transfer rate of 8,0% could be calculated. The disparity between Vienna (10,4%) and rural Burgenland (7,6%) can be explained by the distance to the nearest university, since all Austrian universities are non-residential, and technical schools in reasonable proximity offer an attractive alternative to the grammar schools.

Grades 10 to 13

The proportion of pupils who drop out of the education system on completion of compulsory schooling has dropped steadily from 18,4% to 1,1% between 1971 and 1991. Because of the different durations of curricula in this age bracket, absolute figures rather than percentages are given below.

	1982				1992			
	Grade				Grade			
	10	11	12	13	10	11	12	13
Dual system	65 615	62 395	57 991	11 781	47 417	46 119	45 134	8 728
Full-time vocational school	18 368	14 137	2 244	2 565	12 525	9 712	3 021	3 886
Technical school	18 231	14 524	13 667	12 544	19 401	17 567	17 662	18 170
Normal school	1 246	1 144	1 267	–	1 400	1 199	1 146	1 184
Grammar school (short)	5 454	5 417	4 537	75	4 236	4 102	3 804	151
Grammar school (long)	13 837	13 019	11 723	34	11 395	11 109	10 149	32

The overall drop in enrolment is explained by demographic factors – live births in 1966 being more numerous by 47% than in 1976. Other figures that may appear unusual are caused as follows:

– in both the dual system and the full-time vocational schools, the curricula of different branches are of unequal duration (two to four years for the former, one to four years for the latter);

– for the drop between grades 10 and 11 in full-time vocational and technical schools see section 2 of this chapter;

– the normal school curriculum was extended by one year, and the level from intermediate to pre-university, between 1982 and 1992;

– grade 13 in grammar schools exists only in sub-types for the specially gifted – see section 6 of this chapter.

The dual system leads to qualification at the skilled-worker level. Parents obtain an apprenticeship contract for their children with an employer in one of over 200 apprenticeable trades (industry, crafts, business). These contracts are subject to both legal regulation and collective bargaining. Apprentices are trained on the job under syllabuses decreed by the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, and released to the part-time vocational school, normally either for one day per week or for an eight-week course every year. The decision between the day-release and block-release systems is one taken by the school authorities. It is based on commuting distances, which in turn depend on population density and the number of apprentices in a given trade.

The minimum entrance age for the dual system is 15 years; there is no upper age limit, but attendance at the part-time school is compulsory unless previous comparable full-time schooling can be proved. Two achievement groups exist in some subjects.

Austria is characterised by a preponderance of small and medium-sized companies, with 70% of all enterprises having fewer than five staff and 97% fewer than fifty. This is why the part-time school offers apprentices not only complementary general and theoretical technical instruction but also breadth in practical work by means of school workshops, while depth is contributed by the employer. For the same reason the share of the part-time school in the dual system has recently been increased from 20% to 30% of the working week in some high-technology trades, and other trades are likely to follow.

The proportion of applicants to openings in apprenticeship has gone through fairly regular economic cycles. However, the recent complaint by all but a few "fashionable" trades that young people no longer wish to be apprenticed may point to a change of a more lasting nature, since the reservoir of those neither in school nor in the dual system has been all but exhausted. Unlike Germany, Austria has only few grammar-school leavers in the dual system, since universities have no *numerus clausus*.

Since both the dual system and the full-time vocational schools produce skilled workers, there is some amount of competition between them, though in many trades (for example, barber/hairdresser, confectioner, chimney-

sweep, sailor) no full-time schools exist. Many external factors affect the balance between enrolment figures. Thus, when the end of compulsory full-time schooling and hence the minimum age for entering the dual system was raised by a year in 1962, many full-time, vocational-school curricula were also extended by a year to preserve this balance. On the whole, the future of both training systems seems assured.

In all full-time schools grade 10 is reached by regular promotion from grade 9.

The early specialisation inherent in the structure of upper-secondary education is defended by citing:

– the importance assigned to polyvalence in all technical/vocational curricula;

– a tree structure by which initial training in a fairly broad sector (for example, building) is followed by further specialisation (for example, preservation of historic buildings) in the topmost grades;

– the fact that even if a young person opts to train for a different career at the age of 18 or 19, he or she is no worse off than if the system had not permitted technical/vocational training before that age.

2. University access

Austrian universities accept every citizen who has successfully completed technical, normal or grammar school – there is no *numerus clausus*. Aptitude tests are only required where special talent is called for (in music, art and sports), and complementary examinations, to be taken either within the school system or at a university, are required if a prerequisite for a given course of study (Latin, Greek, descriptive geometry, biology, philosophy) was not a subject in the school curriculum. The first degree is a masters and can be obtained after a minimum of four to five years' study.

There is no direct access to universities from either the dual system or the full-time vocational schools. However, the system features full-time and part-time upgrading courses offering this qualification. A more direct access from these streams is expected to be made possible by the proposed creation of a system of three-year tertiary institutions, which will also, it is hoped:

– relieve the pressure of seekers of admission to universities;

– reduce the actual duration of studies, which not infrequently exceeds twice the legal minimum;

– meet demands of the labour-market for a level between the technician and the graduate engineer;

– be in line with the tertiary systems of most countries of the European Union.

3. Grade-to-grade promotion

Pupils are promoted to the next grade if they have not failed any of the compulsory subjects (see Chapter 8). One or two failing marks can be remedied by a make-up examination in autumn, and a pupil's teachers may waive the examination if the failure is in a single subject that will be taught in the next grade and which the pupil had not failed in the previous year, provided his standing in the other compulsory subjects is reasonable. A recent proposal to substitute hard-and-fast rules for this evaluation of each individual case by teachers failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority in parliament.

4. Special groups

The number of ethnic minority children – many of them refugees – has only recently increased to a level where they constitute the majority of pupils in some classes. Bilingual schools are provided for the recognised "resident" minorities, who may also opt for schools where German is the only medium of instruction. Other minorities are aided by crash courses for refugees, by extra instruction in German and/or their mother tongue in the regular schools, and by keeping down the size of "mixed" classes. There are, however, also classes without special support, particularly if they include only one or two ethnic-minority pupils. All measures are still of the *ad hoc* type. Since young children tend to pick up a foreign language rather quickly, many minority children constitute no problem in the secondary grades, and formal adaptation of the system may not take place until the proportion of pupils needing this kind of support has stabilised.

A recent nationwide survey of grammar schools found 2,7% non-nationals, of whom 24,3% came from the former Yugoslavia, 19,6% from Germany, 15,4% from east European countries, 12,5% from western Europe, and 11,0% from Turkey. Recent figures for compulsory general schools in Vienna are 31,11%, of whom 49,1% came from the former Yugoslavia, 34,0% from Turkey, and 3,8% from Poland.

Only a handful of bilingual schools exist (in Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian and Czech). Recently, two private grammar schools were established with instruction in German and English.

The following facilities are provided for gifted children:

– schools with extra instruction in art, music, sports or technology: grammar schools of this type add a year to the curriculum in order to allow time off for attendance at art schools, conservatories, sports competitions, etc.;

– optional subjects reserved for gifted children (at grammar schools only);

– the privilege of skipping a grade after due assessment, an option rarely taken because of pupils' ties to their classmates.

Slow learners are catered for by remedial instruction in core subjects in all schools, and by the differentiation of achievement groups in the modern school and in the dual system. If the problem is of a graver nature – this also applies to the physically handicapped – it may be catered for in a special school, though there is an increasing trend of integrating such pupils into regular classes. Employers are by and large willing to accept handicapped youth into apprenticeship.

Traditionally paid private tutoring of pupils, particularly of grammar schools, is fairly prevalent. It is dispensed by older pupils, university students, teachers (though a teacher may not tutor pupils of his own school) and outsiders. This state of affairs has always been deplored, and the blame for it is variously assigned to pupils, parents, teachers and the system as a whole, but no effective solution has so far been found.

VI. The school as an organisation and as a community

1. School rules

There is a set of school rules promulgated by a ministry ordinance with optional supplementary rules laid down by a school's tripartite council. Subjects covered are class attendance, punctuality, excuses for lateness and absence (by parents up to the age of 14, by the pupil thereafter), dress ("as required by the occasion"), safety, prohibition of alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking at school (though individual schools may permit smoking in special areas), notification of the school of changes of address, etc. Permissible measures encouraging desirable and discouraging undesirable pupil behaviour are exclusively verbal and must not be demeaning.

If a pupil proves incorrigible or constitutes a permanent hazard to pupils, teachers or other staff, he or she may be expelled by the provincial school board on the motion of the school's teachers. The school board may extend the expulsion to several or all schools. If the pupil is still of compulsory-schooling age, he or she can be transferred to a special school for the behaviourally handicapped.

Until 1974 more authoritarian school rules were in force: pupils of all ages had to be excused by parents, and keeping pupils after class was a common punishment. Corporal punishment of pupils had been abolished in the nineteenth century.

The school rules of 1974, which abolished keeping pupils after class as a form of punishment, have not led to an increase of disciplinary problems. While teachers would always welcome more disciplinary powers, no concrete proposals have been put forward.

2. Deviant behaviour, absenteeism and truancy

Deviant or criminal behaviour by pupils is rare enough not to be considered a pressing social problem. As a preventive measure, schools do everything in their power to warn pupils of the dangers of drug abuse. Yet many teachers complain that they must increasingly double as social workers without being

fully qualified as such. This burden seems to be a major source of teacher "burnout", reported most frequently among teachers of grades 5 to 9, which has only recently been recognised as a well-defined phenomenon, so that it is difficult to judge the extent of its increase.

While records are kept of pupils' unjustified absence from school, absenteeism and truancy are not felt to be a problem, attendance being generally satisfactory even after the end of compulsory schooling.

Teachers' absenteeism is not a problem. Early retirement on medical grounds is rather common throughout Austria and teachers generally lie within the average for other occupations. However, in inner-city modern schools teachers who serve to the legal age limit of 65 are very rare. No significant switching of teachers to non-educational occupations is known.

3. Extracurricular activities, social relations

Most parents feel that their children's social relations and hobbies are the business of the family rather than the school. Many young people take music or ballet lessons and are active in sports associations, scouting and other youth organisations. They rely on private institutions for dancing and driving lessons, and they may attend open university classes in hobbies such as photography or crafts.

This does not imply that schools offer no extracurricular activities or social occasions, but, except in boarding schools and schools offering afternoon supervision, these do not play the same role as in countries with different traditions. Activities most commonly engaged in include projects in environmental protection, skiing weeks, school dances, and travel in celebration of the completion of the course. See also Chapter X.

4. Work by pupils

Work by pupils during holidays is not allowed during compulsory schooling. Thereafter, pupils in full-time schools may look for summer jobs in order to supplement their pocket money or for the life experience, including travelling, which it gives them; or their syllabus may prescribe such work, the required period ranging from two to sixteen weeks over the whole curriculum. (In hotel and catering schools, for example, the school year is shortened by one month in order to accommodate this practice period as well as a month of recreation.) Practice periods are compulsory in most full-time vocational, technical and normal schools (in commercial schools they are being introduced on a "recommended" basis), while apprentices under the dual system work throughout the year.

VII. The curriculum

1. Formal parameters

Subtraction of all school holidays leaves a school year of thirty-nine weeks (forty in one year out of seven), from which another week may be lost by public holidays. A six-day school week is common, but a five-day week may be chosen for a given type of school by provincial authorities, or for an individual school by a majority vote of parents. Apprentices enjoy six weeks of leave per annum from their jobs.

Class periods are of fifty minutes' duration (forty-five minutes in classes for adults). Breaks between classes last from five to fifteen minutes (in technical/vocational schools there may be no break for up to three periods), and lunch breaks are provided if classes continue through the afternoon. The legal limit for class size is thirty pupils; in special cases thirty-six, while in certain subjects (for example, instrumental music, workshops) it may be as low as four or five. Average class sizes are lowest in special schools (1981: 10,9; 1991: 7,3) and range from 21,1 to 31,4 in 1981, from 19,8 to 25,9 in 1991 for other types. The average pupil-teacher ratio has dropped in the same period from 8,5 to 3,8 in the special schools, from 41,0 to 33,7 in the part-time vocational schools, and from approximately 12 to 8 elsewhere.

For primary schools the five-day week has become almost universal, whereas for secondary modern schools the provinces differ widely (from near zero to 100%); post-compulsory schools may offer the five-day week only by way of exception. The long-term trend, however, is clearly in its favour.

2. Sample timetables

Only compulsory subjects (including options) are tabulated. Column headings refer to school types and grades. All other figures are weekly class periods.

Grammar school with early Latin	Grade							
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
German	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
First modern language	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Latin	-	-	5	5	4	3	3	3
Greek or second modern language	-	-	-	-	4	3	3	3
History, social science	-	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Geography, economics	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Biology, environmental studies	3	2	2	2	2	-	2	2
Chemistry	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	2
Physics	-	2	2	2	-	3	2	2
Psychology, philosophy	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Informatics	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Music	2	2	2	1	2	1,5	-	-
Art	2	2	2	2	2	1,5	-	-
Music or art	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Handicraft	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical training	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2
Options	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	3
Total	32	34	33	33	34	32	36	36

Full-time vocational school for the hotel and catering trades	Grade		
	9	10	11
Religion	2	2	2
German	3	2	3
English	3	3	3
History and culture	-	3	-
Tourist geography	-	2	2
Tourism and marketing	-	2	2
General management	-	-	-
Business informatics	2	-	-
Accounting	3	3	3
Text processing	3	2	3
Political education and law	-	-	3
Nutrition	1	1	-
Kitchen management and technology	3	3	4
Restaurant management	2	3	3
Menus and drinks	1	1	-
Hotel and catering practice	3	2	-
Physical training and animation	2	2	2
Options	5	5	4
Total	33	36	34

39

Modern school	Grade			
	5	6	7	8
Religion	2	2	2	2
German	5	5	4	4
Modern language	5	4	3	3
History, social science	-	3	2	2
Geography, economics	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	4	4	4
Drafting	-	-	1,5	1,5
Biology, environment studies	3	2	2	2
Physics, chemistry	-	2	2	4
Music	2	2	2	1
Art, calligraphy	2	2	2	2
Handicraft	2	2	2	2
Home economics	-	-	1,5	1,5
Physical training	4	4	3	3
Total	32	34	33	33

Pre-vocational school	Grade 9
Religion	2
Social consciousness	2
German	4-5
Mathematics	4
Modern language	3
Social science and economics	2
Science in the modern economy	2
Health	0.5
Vocational science and orientation	2
Physical training	3
Seminar (social, economic, scientific or agricultural	3
Options	5-6
Total	33,5

Part-time vocational school for bricklayers and formworkers	Grade		
	10	11	12
Political education	1	-	1
Economics, correspondence, accounting	2	2	2
Technical theory	2	2	2
Technical arithmetic	1	1	1
Drafting and design	1	1	2
Practical work	2	2	1
Total	9	9	9

Technical school for power technology	Grade				
	9	10	11	12	13
Religion	2	2	2	2	2
German	3	2	2	2	2
English	2	2	2	2	2
History, social science	-	-	-	2	2
Geography, economics	2	2	-	-	-
Political education, law, economics	-	-	-	2	2
Physical training	2	2	2	1	1
Maths, applied maths	5	3	4	3	-
Descriptive geometry	2	2	-	-	-
Physics, applied physics	2	2	2	1	-
Chemistry, environment	2	2	-	-	-
Computer science	-	2	2	-	-
Mechanical engineering	5	3	2	2	-
Electrical engineering fundamentals	4	3	-	-	-
Metrology and control	-	2	2	3	3
Electrical machines	-	2	2	3	4
Electrical plant	-	-	2	4	4
Electronics, microelectronics	-	-	2	2	6
Design	-	-	2	4	4
Laboratories	-	-	3	7	8
Workshop	9	9	9	-	-
Total	40	40	40	40	40

Normal school for nursery school teachers	Grade				
	9	10	11	12	13
Religion	2	2	2	2	2
Pedagogy	-	2	3	3	3
Special and remedial pedagogy	-	-	-	1	1
Didactics	1	2	3	3	3
Practice teaching	1	2	5	5	5
German	4	3	3	3	3
Modern language	3	3	2	2	2
History, social science	2	2	2	-	2
Geography, economics	2	2	2	1	-
Law	-	-	-	-	2
Mathematics	3	3	2	2	-
Physics	-	2	2	2	-
Chemistry	-	2	2	-	-
Biology, environment studies	2	2	1	2	-
Health	-	-	-	-	1
Music	2	2	1	2	2
Guitar	2	1	1	-	-
Recorder	-	1	1	1	-
Rhythmic education	-	2	-	-	-
Art	2	2	2	2	-
Handicraft	5	2	2	-	2
Physical training	3	2	2	2	3
Home economics, hygiene	3	-	-	-	-
Traffic education	-	-	-	1	-
Accounting, group dynamics or communication	-	-	-	2	-
Total	37	39	38	36	31

3. Syllabuses

Syllabuses consist of the following parts:

- general section:
  - aims;
  - notes on organisation, content and methodology;
  - timetable.
- subject-specific sections:

- objectives;
- subject matter;
- notes on organisation, content and methodology.

Notes on methodology are advisory only – teachers can choose their teaching methods freely as long as they attain the prescribed objectives.

Other than prescribing the number of written hour examinations during the school year in the few subjects where they are legal, the syllabuses contain no assessment section, all matters of assessment being dealt with globally in a separate ordinance (see Chapter VIII).

Syllabuses are comparatively brief, so that teachers and textbook authors have considerable leeway in selecting specific subject matter under headings such as "Motors, generators, transformers and converters for direct, single-phase and three-phase current". In vocational/technical syllabuses, a printed A4 page will typically cover ten class periods per week for one school year, in other schools two to three.

4. Religion

Under the terms of a concordat with the Holy See, religious instruction is a formally compulsory subject for Roman Catholic pupils in all schools, except part-time vocational schools in seven of the nine provinces, where it is optional. The cost of religious instruction is borne by the state. Equal provisions pertain to all other formally acknowledged religions and denominations. As a compulsory subject, religion counts towards a pupil's average; on the other hand, a pupil may withdraw from religious instruction by making a declaration at the beginning of a school year (up to the age of 14 this is the parents' privilege), thus rendering the subject *de facto* optional. No changes in this state of affairs have occurred since 1945, and none are envisaged.

Only the Churches keep records about withdrawals from religious instruction. This data cannot be made available.

5. Curricular trends

Recent and current trends in secondary curricula include:

– a reduction in the number of class periods concomitant with the shortening of the working week (until 1962, pupils in most full-time vocational and technical schools had up to forty-eight periods per week);

- enhancements in modern languages, computer science/informatics and environmental science;

- an increasing role of project work, though for financial reasons there is no team teaching;

- introduction of options;

- autonomous control by the school over a fraction of the syllabus (see Chapter I).

Over the years the reduction in total teaching hours, mainly in technical and vocational schools, has affected practically all subjects. So far only religious instruction (where the numbers are protected by a concordat) and languages (where it is generally felt that the current level is barely sufficient) have been exempt.

For the mechanisms of curriculum adaptation and innovation see Chapter II.

VIII. Evaluation and assessment

1. Pupil assessment

Continuous assessment is the rule throughout the system, with examinations set, administered and evaluated by the teacher concerned. Observation of a pupil's current work may be supplemented at the teacher's discretion or at the pupil's request by pre-announced oral quizzes of up to fifteen minutes' duration.

Written hour examinations during the school year are only permitted in subjects where written work plays a major role, such as languages, mathematics and accounting. In the higher grades their duration may be extended to two or three class periods. Short (up to twenty-five minutes) written tests became legal in nearly all subjects in 1974.

Assessment takes the form of five marks, "1" (corresponding to A as used in some countries) being excellent, "4" (D) a pass and "5" (F) failure. The definition of the marks is based on:

- achievement in the essentials of the subject;
- achievement in the peripherals of the subject;
- originality of the work performed.

Formal final examinations are prescribed at the end of all curricula leading to university admission as well as many (soon to be extended to all) three-year and four-year full-time vocational schools. They take the following forms:

- practical qualifying examinations at the end of the penultimate year (in some technical curricula);
- a monitored research paper (optional in grammar schools; recently introduced);
- written examinations (two to five hours each) in up to five subjects, some of which may be optional;

– an examination in technological design, laboratory and/or field work (up to forty hours; technical curricula);

– a practical examination (up to forty hours; full-time vocational curricula);

– oral examinations (up to fifteen minutes each) in up to four subjects (some or all optional).

In some technical curricula there are interdisciplinary oral examinations of up to twenty-five minutes' duration. External tests are neither available nor is there any demand for them, comparability of results being felt to be assured at the "input end" by the nationwide identity of curricula, syllabuses and staff recruitment, and at the "output end" by the inspectorate.

The examination board consists of the class teachers and is chaired by an inspector or ministry official. Written and practical examinations are set by teachers. Two different sets of questions are submitted to the provincial school board, which selects one and returns it under seal to be broken in the presence of the candidates. The examination is administered and evaluated by the examining teacher, who proposes a mark for majority decision by the board. Oral examinations are open to the public (though they are usually only attended by pupils of lower grades). Examination questions are set by the examining teacher and approved by the chairperson. Candidates select one of two questions in each subject (vocational/technical curricula) or two out of three (other curricula). Again the mark is proposed by the examiner and voted on by the board.

In case of failure at a final examination, up to three further attempts are allowed. Three sittings per year are provided for the purpose. Failure rates are generally low (below 10% at the first attempt).

No appeal lies against individual marks in annual reports or final examinations. However, the consequences of failing marks, that is failure to be promoted to the next grade or failure in a final examination, may be appealed against with little formality, the appeal being addressed to the provincial school board and in the second instance to the ministry. A final appeal to the administrative court can only be brought by a solicitor.

The number of "units" that must be taken in a final examination is constant for each type of school (with occasional variations of plus or minus one). Individual examinations rather than disciplines are counted, in other words a written and an oral examination in the same discipline count as two units. In the grammar school the number of units is seven, in technical schools four to seven, and in full-time vocational schools four to eight depending on the

specialisation of the school. This large variation is due to the existence of both written and oral multi-subject units. (See section on pupil assessment above.)

Final examinations in the dual system are outside the school authorities' control, being set, administered and evaluated by a board nominated by employers' and employees' organisations, the candidates' trainers being excluded. The examination consists of a theoretical and a practical part, the former being waived if the candidate has obtained pass marks in all compulsory subjects of the part-time vocational school's terminal year.

2. System evaluation and the inspectorate

No national assessment of pupil performance or more extensive formal system evaluation is provided. Overall performance is assured by the following means:

- school inspection including the chairing of final examinations;

- compilation and publication of statistics relating to achievement;

- reaction of the authorities to positive and negative outside criticism (for some of the mechanisms provided see Chapter II).

Inspectors also have administrative duties within the provincial school boards (see Chapter I), and it is a constant complaint that these tend to increase to the detriment of their pedagogical functions. But authorities have been reluctant to appoint additional inspectors, thus decreasing the number of schools per inspector, partly for budgetary reasons and partly because this would impair their function with respect to comparability of results.

3. Assessment of teachers

Like other civil servants, teachers are subject to an assessment of their overall achievement, which is composed of assessment in specific areas, such as success in imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes, in dealing with parents and in the performance of administrative duties.

Achievement is rated as above average, average or below average. Below-average achievement can only be assessed if a formal warning has not resulted in any improvement. Ratings are proposed by the head of school (on the recommendation of the head of division in schools where these exist, see Chapter IX) and passed, after approval by the competent inspector, to an independent assessment board whose members are appointed by the school authorities and by teachers' representatives respectively. The board may

interview the teacher, who has the right to be represented by counsel or by a colleague of his or her choice. There is a board of appeals, and a further appeal to the constitutional court may be brought by a solicitor.

After a teacher's initial rating, no further assessment takes place unless it is below average or requested by the teacher, the head of school, or the inspector.

A below-average rating in three consecutive years carries automatic dismissal, though this is extremely rare. Otherwise teachers' ratings are of consequence only in applications for headships and inspectorships.

IX. School staff

1. Senior staff

All heads of school are appointed from among practising teachers of the type of school in question by the process described in Chapter II. Their function is to ensure the smooth operation of the school, which involves, among other things:

- implementing school laws, syllabuses and other ordinances, and administrative directives;

- applying for and spending government funds;

- inspecting, advising and assessing staff;

- performing and organising public relations.

As in most cases a newly appointed head has not previously exercised these functions, their performance is hard to predict from their previous record. Therefore courses in school management are offered by institutes of further teacher training to heads and, more recently, candidates for headship. A recent proposal, expected to be implemented soon, would make appointments of heads temporary and renewable at five-year intervals on recommendation of the school council.

A consequence of the above duties is a reduction of the head's teaching load depending on the size of the school. The heads of the largest schools are relieved from teaching duties altogether. Heads also receive extra pay depending on both their seniority and the size of the school.

Most schools of a certain minimum size also have other senior staff in one or two of the following categories:

- an assistant head or administrator;

- a head of the residential section;

– division heads (for example, for different branches of engineering), whose responsibilities include the division's entire curriculum including general education subjects;

– department heads for hotel and catering services, domestic science and textile processing.

These take over some of the head's functions (though the head still has ultimate responsibility) and enjoy a correspondingly reduced teaching load (though never to zero). Their extra pay is two-thirds that of a head.

2. Teacher training and recruitment

There are four pathways into the teaching profession:

– modern-school and pre-vocational-school teachers as well as teachers of general-education subjects in vocational schools must have completed a three-year teacher-training college, normally specialising in two subjects;

– grammar-school teachers and teachers of general-education subjects in technical and normal schools must have a university (masters) degree, which is obtained after a minimum of 4½ years of studying education and specialising in (normally) two subjects, whereupon they undergo a year of supervised practise teaching;

– teachers of theoretical technical subjects in pre-university-level schools must have a masters degree in the field concerned as well as several years' practical experience in their profession, whereas training in education is assured by in-service courses after they are hired;

– teachers of practical technical subjects in all schools and of theoretical technical subjects in vocational schools must either have completed a relevant technical school or be qualified master craftsmen. After several years' practise in an enterprise and a brief trial period of teaching (required so that they can be paid in the following phase) they are seconded to a vocational teacher training college for a period of one to three years to study education. On passing the certification examination they return to their schools. Details vary for each speciality and may deviate in some instances from the general pattern outlined above.

Teacher training colleges (TTC) are part of the school rather than the university system, but they have the same entrance requirements as universities, except that no supplementary examinations are required for any combina-

tion of previous schooling and disciplines studied. For admission to the industrial section of a vocational TTC, a master craftsman's examination is accepted in lieu of a final secondary examination.

Further teacher training institutes (FTTI) are independent of the TTCs, although they are normally located in close proximity. They cater for both university-trained and college-trained teachers. Each province has one or two TTCs and one FTTI, but only four of the nine have a VTTC (Vocational Teacher Training College).

The law obliges all teachers to engage in further training, although enrolment in specific courses offered by the FTTIs provided in each province is voluntary. The typical further-training course lasts a week during the school year, and colleagues take over the teacher's regular duties as extra work during his or her absence. The teacher gets his or her fare and expenses for room and board refunded if the course takes place in another town, and the stand-ins get extra pay if a teacher's absence (for any reason) exceeds three days.

For recruitment procedures see Chapter II. The last twenty years have seen a gradual shift from teacher shortage to teacher surplus, and nowadays there are waiting periods of up to several years for teachers of most general-education subjects, particularly in Vienna and the provincial capitals. The situation is less critical in music and physical training, and in some technological subjects there is an ongoing teacher shortage, which can only be resolved by teachers carrying a paid overtime load, which they cannot refuse unless it exceeds 25% on top of their regular teaching load.

3. Stages in a teacher's career

A teacher is first hired on a contractual basis. In the current surplus situation this phase may have up to three sub-stages: a part-time contract, a full-time contract for a limited period, and an unlimited full-time contract. Contracts are regulated by civil law and by the Civil Servants (Contracts) Act.

After a minimum of four years' service (part-time periods counting pro rata) a teacher becomes eligible for tenure. This is granted after satisfactory assessment, provided his or her continued employment is assured. Besides protecting the teacher from dismissal before mandatory retirement age except for cause, tenure means a considerably higher pension, though there is practically no difference in active salary. Even a tenured teacher may, however, be transferred to any other school in the province (compulsory-level schools) or in the whole country (other schools) unless he has reached the next stage. Tenure is recommended by the head, endorsed by the inspector, decided by the provincial school board and, in the case of post-compulsory schools, signed by the minister.

At least half the permanently assured positions at a school must be "stationary", that is teachers holding such a position cannot be transferred to another school against their will. The competent school board awards them on teachers' applications according to set rules.

At approximately 50 years of age a teacher becomes eligible for an honorary title, which is proposed by the head of school, passed through channels and granted by the head of state.

Unless incapacitated at an earlier age, a teacher may retire after he or she has reached the age of 60. Retirement is mandatory at the age of 65.

4. Teachers' duties

Teachers in intermediate and pre-university-level schools carry a nominal teaching load of 20 "units", which, because of conversion factors assigned to each subject, translate to anything between 17 periods weekly (for languages and technology) and 25 periods weekly (for some practical subjects). In the compulsory-level schools the bandwidth is somewhat narrower.

Teachers may at any time be assigned, or relieved of, the following additional functions, for which they receive a reduction of their teaching load:

- form teacher (special responsibilities in shaping the attitudes of the pupils in a class; administrative matters pertaining to the class);

- head of practical training;

- school librarian or custodian of hardware for a science, sports equipment, etc.;

- educational counsellor (see Chapter II).

Teaching loads are the result of collective bargaining on the basis of a hypothetical forty-hour week, the balance of time being filled with supplementary duties such as staff meetings, preparation of lessons, correction of homework and examination papers, as well as self-directed further training. However, teachers are not required to remain on the school premises for any of these duties except staff meetings. They are also permitted to hold other jobs provided there is no conflict of interest or of hours. Second jobs are even encouraged in the case of technical/vocational teachers, because they assure constant updating of the teacher's technical knowledge and skills. Additional jobs may even be offered at the school itself, if it has an attached governmental materials testing centre or the like.

5. Teachers' salaries

Annual salaries listed below are in Austrian schillings, effective January 1992. They are increased annually after collective bargaining to keep abreast of inflation and of pay rises in the private sector. Scale rises are biennial.

– College-trained teachers:	initial	213 262 to 251 118
	average	290 794 to 383 474
	final	428 120 to 575 498
– University-trained teachers:	initial	285 978
	average	472 996
	final	711 900
– Supplement for heads:	minimum	15 778
	maximum	118 832
– Inspectors:	initial	430 402 to 554 848
	final	686 546 to 845 054
– University-trained officials:	initial	275 870
	final	986 328 (exceptionally 1 180 466)

6. Other staff

Care, animation and supervision of residential pupils outside class hours may be a secondary function of teachers, for which they receive a reduction of their teaching load. This function may, however, also be exercised full-time by para-educational staff trained in normal schools.

For school physicians see Chapter II.

Schools also have secretarial and accounting staff (part-time in small schools) and caretakers. Cleaning of premises is frequently contracted to outside firms.

X. The European dimension

1. Curricular provisions

School curricula, textbooks and audiovisual materials stress European aspects wherever appropriate, particularly in subjects like history, geography, economics, political education and environment, but also in such matters as international standards and commercial usage.

At least one European language other than German is a compulsory subject in all full-time schools from grade 3 and in an increasing number of part-time vocational schools. Several types have two compulsory European languages, and an extra language may frequently be added as an optional subject. At least one European language is a compulsory examination subject in the final examination of most pre-university schools. In the others (industrial, agricultural and forestry branches of the technical school system) it is currently an option, but there are proposals to make it compulsory there as well.

Statistics on the percentage of pupils taking the various foreign languages have been found to contain too many errors to be reliable. What can be said is that after grade 2 nearly 100% of pupils learn English, the most popular second language is French, followed by Italian, Spanish and various Slavic languages.

2. Extracurricular activities

In many schools, teachers help to establish pen-friendships abroad, school twinnings and holiday trips and exchanges. They may call on a department of the ministry as well as many private organisations for support.

Formal exchanges of whole classes for a few weeks during the school year are permitted on principle, but frequently encounter financial and administrative obstacles as well as major differences in curriculum. They are most frequently implemented in residential grammar schools and in hotel and catering schools.

Some pupils, again mainly in hotel and catering schools, succeed in going abroad for the prescribed summer jobs.

There are regular national and international school competitions on European subjects.

Exchanges of teachers and foreign-language teaching assistants are possible under the terms of bilateral cultural agreements with many European countries. The quotas provided for in the agreements can sometimes not be filled because of a shortage of candidates from abroad, who, if they intend to use their stay to improve their German, may shy away from the supposed non-standard features of Austrian speech.

Austria takes part in the Council of Europe's In-service Training Programme for Teachers, granting fifty travel and subsistence bursaries annually to teachers from other member states for participation in short courses of further training conducted in German for Austrian teachers of vocational and technical schools. Austrian teachers in turn participate in courses offered by other countries under the programme.

XI. Efficiency and performance statistics

1. Enrolment

Type of school	1972	1977	1982	1987	1992
Upper primary schools	42 961	3 964	798	272	167
Special schools (grades 5-8)	13 698	16 774	15 417	9 717	9 817
Modern schools	334 759	378 352	316 115	269 830	250 342
Comprehensive schools	-	29 954	37 577	-	-
Pre-vocational schools	30 489	35 644	32 771	24 831	18 461
Part-time vocational schools	143 124	176 360	197 782	175 908	149 836
Full-time vocational schools	71 798	86 119	71 757	64 699	55 124
Technical schools	33 176	54 999	82 456	95 397	99 077
Normal schools	4 585	6 254	5 277	4 461	11 059
Grammar schools (short grades 9-12)	18 278	19 795	21 324	19 692	17 514
Grammar schools (long grades 5-12)	129 895	151 080	155 572	143 098	141 905

Comments:

The increasing importance of the technical schools is due:

- to the government's expansion programme;
- the excellent job prospects of graduates.

The virtual disappearance of the upper-primary school is a consequence of improved school-bus links, which have permitted pupils in sparsely populated areas access to more conventional types of establishments.

The increased enrolment in the normal schools is due to their conversion in 1985 (after pilot projects) from four-year schools without university access (equivalent to full-time vocational schools) to five-year schools with university access (equivalent to technical schools).

2. Graduates with the right to university access

Type of school	1971	1986	1991
Technical schools	3 339	14 527	16 731
Normal schools	-	33	856
Grammar schools (short: grades 9-12)	10 741	16 574	13 749
Total	14 080	31 134	31 336

3. Percentages of repeaters/drop-outs (annual percentages)

Type of school	1991
Primary schools (all grades)	1,19%
Special schools (all grades)	4,71%
Modern schools	2,17%
Pre-vocational schools	9,03%
Part-time vocational schools	2,73%
Full-time vocational schools	9,99%
Technical schools	12,88%
Normal schools	5,43%
Grammar schools (short: grades 9-12)	14,72%
Grammar schools (long: grades 5-12)	5,99%

4. Admissions to higher education

	1971	1986	1991
Universities, schools of art	10 082	22 781	22 602
Teacher training colleges	4 795	2 212	2 493
Vocational teacher training colleges	453	410	356
Social-work colleges	440	271	357
Total	15 770	25 674	25 808
Transfer rate from secondary school	71,6%	82,5%	82,4%
from technical school	43,1%	44,5%	51,4%
from grammar school	73,6%	91,8%	92,4%

5. Proportion of 15-year-olds neither in full-time schools nor in the dual system

1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
18,4%	12,5%	8,4%	4,9%	1,1%

6. Unemployment rates (rates as percentages of the total age-groups)

	1988	1991
Overall	5,3%	5,8%
15 to 18-year-olds	2,8%	2,6%
19 to 24-year-olds	6,7%	6,5%

XII. Challenges, problems and prospects

Challenges facing secondary education in Austria in the remaining years of the century have been mentioned throughout this text. The main areas of effort are summarised below:

– striking a balance between the degree of school autonomy that will make the system more flexible and facilitate the new roles of secondary schools with respect to the community, on the one hand, and the amount of centralisation required for the essential unity of the system, on the other;

– carrying the principle of greater autonomy to the level of the individual pupil by enhancing the role of options, library research, term papers, etc., but also in guidance towards self-criticism;

– provision of improved facilities for pupils whose mother tongue is not German;

– enhancement of vocational orientation in the upper cycle of the grammar school, particularly in view of the planned major extension of the non-university tertiary sector;

– enhancement of foreign-language learning both quantitatively and qualitatively, with a long-term aim of bilingualism;

– an increased role of political, economic and ecological consciousness including the interrelations between these subject areas and with particular stress on European affairs, with special efforts concerning their treatment in textbooks and audiovisual aids.

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The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the educational systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.
Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.
Given that this is an area in which changes take place particularly quickly and that the translation, revision and publication of the manuscript require a certain amount of time, there will be an opportunity to publish updated information for the Final Conference of the project in 1996.

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61